

volumes by O'Hara and Ashbery —  
and also one of James' books —  
lay next to an electric typewriter. They

also were quiet. He rose, walked  
to his tiny kitchen to prepare  
a salad. He could hear children

playing outside. He hoped  
they would all endure to and through  
adulthood, and thrive — he knew  
the risks were high of terrible events  
buffeting them.  
He sliced lettuce and cucumbers,  
washed carrots and cabbages,

reached toward the shelf  
where he kept vinegar, picked up  
an empty bottle. Damn.  
No vinegar. He would have to drive  
to a supermarket, or do without.

He gazed through a window  
at the setting sun.  
He began to weep again;  
losing James Schuyler was enormously difficult  
to deal with. He sat down on an old chair  
he had had for two decades.  
The children had fallen silent.  
He thought of the Atlantic.

#### THE READING

I dreamed I went  
to a poetry reading —  
e.e. cummings read  
some of his  
poems. I clapped  
several times,  
especially after he finished  
"if learned darkness from our searched world."  
He made some remarks,  
telling the crowd  
people shouldn't idolize  
those they admire.  
I made my way to the front,  
shook hands  
and asked his opinion  
of how the critics  
deal with his reputation.  
He frowned at me,



and said poets have more important things  
to worry about.

"Say," he said. "I like  
that fellow Robert Creeley.  
Yes, I certainly like  
that fellow Robert Creeley."  
At that, my dream  
faded into oblivion.

— Joe Lackey

Amarillo TX

#### A BELL ON A GIRL'S BICYCLE

I think this is a bell on a girl's bicycle  
I think it sings  
I think it rings  
I think it is awakening  
I think it is ringing angels  
I think it is disturbing the saints  
I think of its anniversary  
I think of momentarily  
I think I am spellbound  
I think of its silvery reverberations  
I think this is a bell that rings in the center  
of the universe

#### DOORBELL

I think this is a doorbell in blue heaven  
I am touching the touchstone  
I am touching the immediate  
I am touching the bells  
I am touching charing cross  
I am hearsay  
I am listening  
I am hearing  
I am ringing  
I am hearing the angels sing

#### SOLDIERS AFTERWARDS

I thought it rained at first  
I thought the rain is stronger at first  
I thought of any day it rained